

# To Reach Peace, Teach Peace

Long before Jesus, the Christ, appeared on earth, the Prophet Jeremiah exclaimed: *They cry, "Peace! Peace!" But there is no peace* (Jer 6:14, 8:11).

How many ordinary people around the globe are, like Jeremiah, fed up to the point of tears, or anger, or despair with politicians, "prophets," "pastors," and media pundits talking "peace, peace" and delivering "war, war, and more war?" Jesus Himself was visibly distraught, indeed reduced to tears, over the hollow "peace, peace" proclamations of those who ceaselessly present as "ways to peace" nothing but ways to more war, and to all the evils that war lets loose within the human race.

*As He drew near, He saw the city (Jerusalem) and wept over it, saying, "If this day you only knew what makes for peace" (Lk 19:41).*

## Catastrophic Misery

Why did Jesus weep? Because He not only cognitively knew, but also emotionally felt, what the devastating outcome was going to be, what terrible suffering, evil, and death were going to ensue, for those who continued to follow the counterfeit ways of peace dispensed by religious leaders, politicians, pseudo-prophets, and pundits, who either did not know what they were talking about or who were simply lying to serve their own interests. In either case, catastrophic misery was going to rain down on ordinary people once the elites released, and justified their release of, "the dogs of war." Jesus refused to pretend ignorance of the horrifying consequences for those followers of bogus ways of peace - ways of peace that were really ways of lies, greed, violence, and war. And so, out of heartfelt compassion for those being deceived, as well as for those doing the deceiving, regarding the way of peace, *Dominus flavit*: "The Lord wept."

Aware of the myriad ways to peace continually palmed off from cradle to grave on people as authentic, but which are in reality only political and/or pious frauds, Pope John Paul II entitled his first World Day of Peace message, in 1979, *To Reach Peace, Teach Peace*. On the surface the title communicates the simple, positive truth that people cannot choose what they do not know, that people cannot construct what they have no idea how to build, that people cannot live according to concepts they have never heard. Negatively the title communicates that if violence and enmity are nurtured and taught as effective, right, good, and even, holy ways to peace, then violence and enmity are what will be lived personally and societally as effective, right, good, and holy ways of achieving peace. The title is simple, yet profound and multifaceted.



*Ex umbris et imaginibus in veritatem*  
Out of shadows and phantasms into the truth

By Rev. Emmanuel Charles McCarthy

## Means and Ends

The title is essentially a derivation of a moral truism: the means are the ends in embryo. As people choose certain means to achieve an end, they are simultaneously determining what that end will be-and that end may well be, and often is, very different from the “end” they had in mind. As St. Paul enunciates it: *God is not mocked. A person must reap what he or she sows* (Gal 6:7). A person or a society may, via a propaganda operation, re-name arsenic “wine,” and thereby convince people that arsenic is wine. But this alters nothing in natural reality. The effects on the human being of drinking this liquid will be those of drinking arsenic, not wine. Mis-naming will, of course, in social reality trick some people into poisoning themselves by drinking arsenic camouflaged as wine. There is, however, conclusive historical evidence that poison-physical, moral, or spiritual-called by any other name is still poison and must operate as poison in the human condition - the re-naming notwithstanding.

For this reason John Paul II selected as his title and theme for his second World Day of Peace message, *Truth, the Power of Peace*. In this message, he said that the failure to accurately name reality is a major cause of violence and war. The Pope’s precise words were, again, striking in their simplicity and profundity:

*Restoring peace means, in the first place, calling by their proper names acts of violence in all their forms. Murder must be called by its proper name: murder is murder; political or ideological motives do not change its nature. The massacre of men and women, whatever their race, age or position, must be called by its proper name.*



Gravissimam plagam: Thai children with Russian AK-47 and American M-16

The multiple euphemisms and mis-namings of reality by those engaged in violence, in the propagandizing of violence, and in the sale of violence, must not be allowed to proceed unhindered to mislead people into participating in murder. The Christian and the Church has the responsibility to *call, by their proper names, acts of violence in all their forms: Murder must be called by its proper name: murder*. Participation in murder must be called what it is: participation in murder. It must not be allowed to be euphemized or re-named “making a living” or “doing one’s duty.”

## Arms for the Anawim

The Russian Kalashnikov assault rifle (AK-47 is a high-tech, industrialized weapon. It requires significantly-developed intelligence and a significantly-developed economic system to produce it and to market it profitably. It does not, however, require a significantly-developed intelligence to use it. Any child can fire it. That is one of its main selling points. Hence, more AK-type rifles have been produced than all other assault rifles combined. It is estimated that the 75,000,000 of them, spread across five continents at this hour, have likely inflicted more lethal results than any other single weapon system ever produced.

Only a few countries in the world have the wherewithal and the interest to manufacture this weapon. Yet it is a staple in the Third World, used far and wide by the illiterate and the poor to slaughter each other by the millions on behalf of this or that revolution, this or that plutocratic government, this or that dictator, this or that corporation, this or that religious fanatic. How did such an expensive and technologically sophisticated instrument of mayhem and death ever get into the hands of impoverished people and destitute nations on such a large scale?

## Gravissimam Plagam

We need look no further for an answer than to the two famous and prophetic words from the Second Vatican Council’s 1965 document, *Gaudium et Spes* §81: *gravissimam plagam*. The complete thought reads: *Therefore it must be said again: the arms race is a virulent plague (gravissimam plagam) for humanity, and one which injures the poor to an intolerable degree*. The Council then went on to say, *It is much to be feared, that if this arms race persists, it will eventually spawn all the lethal ruin whose path it is now making ready*.

It is this *gravissimam plagam* that puts the Kalashnikov AK-47 in the hands of pauperized people and infects them with an entity as lethal to them as the *gravissimam plagam* caused by the AIDS virus. It is this *gravissimam plagam* that has spawned lethal ruin throughout the Third World, and increasingly throughout the Second and First Worlds.

The arms industry, which is intentionally organized so as to efficiently deliver pain and destruction, is the most profitable business on the planet at this time, and it is completely at the service of enmity, violence, and greed. Trillions of dollars a year are spent on creating, manufacturing, distributing, marketing, and purchasing the raw instrumentality by which human lives are subjected to unspeakable levels of suffering and unfathomable levels of destruction.

Billions of dollars more are invested annually in devising and implementing ever-new schemes and methodologies for nurturing, promoting, and sustaining the spirits, the mind-styles, the ideologies, the value systems, and the views of life and reality that make these weapons-and the tidal waves of misery to which they continuously



doom God's poor-appear not only necessary, but desirable; not only legal, but of God!

Billions more dollars, yes billions more, are spent bribing Third World politicians, military personnel, and dictators to employ state tax revenues to purchase state-of-the-art weaponry produced by First World arms manufacturers. Indeed, it is well documented-as far back as the "merchants of death" scandals of World War I- that First World armament corporations have no qualms about bribing people on both sides and selling weapons to both parties at the same time in a murderous conflict; nor do they have any problem with fostering lethal conflict between two of their clients. (See the powerful 30-minute DVD, *Arms for the Poor*, distributed by the Catholic Foreign Mission Society of America, or *Black Money: International Bribery*, on PBS' *Frontline*.)

## Peace - Madison Avenue and Wall Street Style

This *gravissimam plagam* is marketed and sold under the banner of attaining or maintaining "peace." Its explicit and implicit "way of peace" is encapsulated in the words *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, "If you want peace, prepare for war," or sometimes: *Si vis pacem, fac bellum*, "If you want peace, make war." That such public relations slogans and ways of peace are not the Way of Peace of Jesus Christ is self-evident to any literate person who reads the Gospels. That such slogans and ways of peace are impossible ways of peace is rationally patent.

If *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, is a truism, it must be universal. This means it must also be applicable to one's enemies. If they want peace, they should prepare for war too. So, if the President of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad wants peace, and *Si vis pacem, para bellum* is the way to peace, he better pour more money into his nuclear weapons program. And, such would be the way to peace, *mutatis mutandis*, for all 194 nation-states. But even the most hard-line militaristic hawk knows that this is a sure-fire recipe for war, not peace. Original sin, concupiscence, ignorance, mental illness, accident, etc., reduce this way of peace to absurdity. *Si vis pacem, para bellum* is a false truism. It is not a way of peace but is an advertising slogan which keeps the weapons industry running full blast and makes it a gold mine for those who control it and profit from it. *Si vis pacem, para bellum* is a way to riches for the very few and a way to destruction for the very many.

Of course, each of the 194 nations, who lived by *Si vis pacem, para bellum*, would perpetually be in need of weapons' updates, repairs and replacements. And who would make lavish profits supplying such indispensable services? And from whom would the money come for this? And which human beings would - and presently do - pay the price in money, misery, madness and death for a perpetual war economy, even if a shot is never fired? Not the human beings who spend their days on Madison Avenue and Wall Street. The poor pay the bill-because what is done to the poor in war by bombs is done to the poor between wars by the preparation for war.

## Death and Destruction as Big Business

In 1966, the Trappist monk, Thomas Merton, summed up the *gravissimam plagam* that the 2,500 Catholic Bishops at Vatican II addressed in 1965. He wrote:

*The real moral problem of violence today is obscured by archaic and mythical presuppositions...Our antiquated theology myopically focuses on individual violence alone. It shudders at the mugging or killing where a mess is made on our own doorstep, but fails to see the antiseptic violence of corporately organized mur-*

*der...Violence today is white-collar violence, the systematically organized bureaucratic and technological destruction of human beings. Modern technological mass murder is not directly visible like individual murder. It is abstract, corporate, businesslike, respectable, free of guilt feelings and therefore a thousand times more effective and deadly than the eruption of individual hate. And above all, it is profitable.*

In 1976, in his statement on disarmament to the United Nations, Pope Paul VI passionately and definitively put the lie to the accepted political and economic thinking that First World political and economic elites employ to justify the arms race and to profit handsomely from it: *The armaments race is to be condemned unreservedly...It is in itself an act of aggression which amounts to a crime, for even when they are not used, by their cost alone, armaments kill the poor by causing them to starve.* (NOTE: Somewhere on this planet, every day, another 25,000 human beings starve to death or die from hunger-related disease: every 4 seconds, another corpse.)

In his 1979 World Peace Day message, Pope John Paul II noted that *Public opinion is often less sensitive to the various forms of non-truth that underlie violence and that create a fertile soil for it...To promote truth as the power of peace means that we ourselves must make a constant effort not to use the weapons of falsehood, even for a good purpose.* Silence can be falsehood, a lie, if silence is interpreted as giving consent or diminishing the radical seriousness of a gravely intrinsic evil—or if silence causes people to be unwittingly drawn into intrinsically grave evil. Indeed, silence can be violence. Once again, Pope John Paul II concurs: *Restoring peace means, in the first place, calling by their proper names acts of violence in all their forms. Murder must be called by its proper name: murder is murder; political or ideological motives do not change its nature.* Moral torpor is not permitted the Christian where violence and murder are being passed-off as something other than what they are - evil.

## The Poor and Their Children The 'Nobodies'

Jean-Paul Sartre, the famous twentieth-century French philosopher and atheist, was speaking the truth when he bluntly told his audience, *When the rich make war, the poor die.* Jay Gould, the infamous late eighteenth-century American robber-baron, who made a fortune from the blood and agony of hundreds of thousands of other human beings, once remarked: *I can hire half the poor to kill the other half.* The poor, the *anawim* and especially their children, are always putty in the hands of the rich and powerful who pretty much do with them as



*Gravissimam plagam: No words necessary, just raw evil.*

Picture courtesy of Rev. McCarthy

they wish all over the world. The *anawim* and their children are “things,” mere carbon units, “nobodies,” to be kept in line, manipulated by mass media, used and abused, retained or thrown away, according to the needs and whims of the economically and politically powerful.

Hermann Göering, Nazi *Reichsmarshall*, was perhaps more clear-



*Behold what the First World arms merchants have wrought!*

minded on this subject than most theologians and religious leaders when he said: *Why, of course, the people don't want war. Why should some poor slob on a farm want to risk his life in a war when the best he can get out of it is to come back to his farm in one piece? Naturally, the common people don't want war. [But] it is always a simple matter to drag the people along.*

## One Has to Make a Living Somehow

Why is it *always a simple matter to drag the people along*? The answer: Prior social nurturing, religiously endorsed and/or participated in, primes the pump—more precisely it structures the neuronal architecture of the human brain - so that the human being is almost inescapably trapped in concepts and in emotions that serve as the “hooks” by which to *drag him or her along* into evil which is experienced as normal, good, honorable, and even holy.

Over 75 percent of the arms sold to the Third World each year are manufactured in predominantly Christian countries: Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States - with the United States selling more weapons to the Third World than all other First World countries combined. The Kalashnikov AK-47 is not created *ex nihilo* in the hands of an illiterate and penniless child! Processes chosen, designed, implemented and morally validated in largely Christian First World countries place it there.

So, I would like to add to the acutely accurate thinking of John Paul II, Jean-Paul Sartre, Thomas Merton, Pope Paul VI, and even Jay Gould and Hermann Göering, on the matter at hand, the following critical point: The rich and the powerful can always *hire* the *anawim* to produce the weapons to kill the *anawim*. In a recent PBS program on the cost of the Iraq War, a woman, obviously not well-to-do, who packed ammunition in a Kansas munitions factory—ammunition headed for Iraq - was asked if she had any moral concerns about being a link in a chain that sends ammunition to kill people she does not even

know on the other side of the world. She answered: *Of course I would rather be packing chocolates, but this is the only job I can find.* Being unable to find any other job is due neither to a lack of diligence on her part nor to an accident of life. It is part and parcel of the plans that the powers-that-be have for her in a perpetual war economy.

Lanza del Vasto (1901–1981), staunch Catholic, Italian philosopher, follower of the Nonviolent Jesus, and close friend of Mahatma Gandhi and Simone Weil, founder of La Communauté de l'Arche at La Borie Noble, France in 1937, often told the following story to expose the plight of the *anawim* in the face of a world economy tied resolutely to perpetuating for personal profit the manufacture and sale of arms:

*One day as I was walking along,  
I saw a lamb diligently sharpening an axe on a grindstone.  
I asked him: "What are you doing?"  
He said: "I am sharpening this axe  
for my master and his friends."  
I responded with alarm:  
"But don't you know they are going to kill you with it?!"  
"Yes," said the lamb.  
"Then why do you keep on sharpening it?"  
"One has to make a living somehow."*

## The Masters of the World and the Perpetual War Economy

And so the hermetically sealed circle of violence in a perpetual war economy - a worldwide closed and controlled loop that universally enriches the rich and destroys the poor - is complete. The *anawim* kill each other and die, by way of the weapons they themselves are forced to make. Setting the poor against the poor in no-exit, survivor schemes is the perennial way the economic and political *princes of this world* and its kingdoms acquire and maintain their power and glory. But this is a power and glory that Jesus, the King of Glory explicitly rejects - in the desert and in His teaching and on the cross—because it comes from Satan, whom He refuses to serve: *You shall worship the Lord, your God, and Him alone shall you serve* (Lk 4:8, Mt 4:10).

He rejects it because His mission is to bring peace to all humanity and to show all humanity - via His chosen disciples, His Church on earth—the true Way of Peace, the Way of Shalom in all its fullness. *Peace I leave you. My peace I give you. Not as the world gives peace do I give you peace* (Jn 14:27), are Jesus' words telling His disciples and all humanity that the gift desired by human beings from time immemorial—peace—is now available. Indeed, *peace in the New Testament becomes nearly synonymous with salvation...Paul's phrase "the God of peace" is equivalent to "the saving God,"* states John L. McKenzie, S.J., in his monumental scholarly work, the *Dictionary of the Bible* (IMPRIMATUR, 1965). But Jesus does not and cannot give peace the way the world gives peace, because the way to peace that the world teaches can never and will never bring humanity peace. The way of the world's *faux-peace* is the way of the *Father of lies...who was a murderer from the beginning* (Jn 8:44).

St. Augustine says that the Church is an extension of Christ in time and space. The Church consists of every person Baptized into Christ. The Church is composed of every person who has become, by adoption, what Christ is by nature, regardless of his or her ministry within the Church and to humanity. It is therefore the vocation of the Church and every Baptized person to be an agent, model, witness and a little incarnation of that peace and that Way of peace of which Jesus is *the* incarnation and teacher. The Church and all Baptized persons are explicitly called to be peacemakers, as Jesus is a peacemaker - and as



He unambiguously teaches that His chosen disciples are to be peacemakers.

Bringing Christ's Peace and Christ's way and means of Peace to humanity is the Christian's vocation. It is not the Christian's nor the Church's vocation to bring the ways and means of "peace" of the *Father of lies who was a murderer from the beginning* to humanity. Why? Because Satan's way of peace, that is, peace by way of violence, murder, enmity, greed, the lust for power, destruction and lies, has left people-generation after generation for a thousand generations - crying *Peace! Peace! But there is no peace.*

To fulfill the Christian vocation of being an instrument of the Lord's peace, especially in these days of global mass-media brainwashing, it is necessary to heed once more the words of John Paul II: *Restoring peace means, in the first place, calling by their proper names acts of violence in all their forms. To Reach Peace, the Church and the Christian, by word and deed, must Teach Peace, as embodied in the Way of Peace taught by the words and deeds of the Prince of Peace-and to teach no other way.*

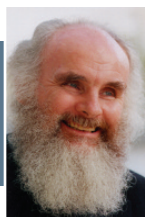
## Fidelity to a Vocation Originating in Eternity

Why, no other way?

First, because as Pope Benedict XVI has made clear, in light of the Christian belief that Jesus is the *Logos, the Word*, of God: *Contradictory things cannot be the means to salvation.* Second, because Jesus is the incarnation of the *God of peace* (Rm 16:20, 1Th 5:23) *in whom violence and cruelty can have no part* (Roman Missal, Mass of Peace and Justice). Third, because the *Word* of God, long before He became incarnate in Jesus, the Christ, and appeared on earth, spoke thus to the Prophet Jeremiah: *I know the plans I have in mind for you, plans for peace not disaster, plans to give you a future full of hope* (Jer 29:11). These plans are incompatible with and hostile to the plans that the arms industry and its bought-and-paid-for economic, political and military hucksters have for humanity!

It has often been said that the institutional Churches are where the teachings of Jesus-on His Way of peace-go to die. Be that as it may, the vocation of the Church and of the Christian is to be an instrument and an agent of those wonderful plans for peace, which God has in mind for humanity and for which God has given humanity the mind to implement. The Church and the Christian fulfill this vocation by going forth and *making disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I (Jesus) have commanded you* (Mt 28:20)-**and teaching them nothing contradictory and to obey nothing contradictory to what He commanded.** This is the only Way to the genuine personal and communal peace for which the human being universally pines. It is a Way of peace that can never, never come from the barrel of a Kalashnikov AK-47 or any of its ilk.

"If this day you only knew what makes for peace" (Lk 19:41). Well, there is *Good News*: today we do know *what makes for peace!* How do we know? In, with and through Jesus, God tells us *what makes for peace.* Believe it or not! Teach it or not! Implement it or not! For those who do believe it is the only Way out of the *shadows and phantasms* of the sham peace offered to the world by the *Father of lies who was a murderer from the beginning.* For those graced with faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus' Way is the only Way to enter into the plans for peace that God has in mind for us. Stated succinctly, His Way is the Way of the Cross of nonviolent, suffering, self-sacrificial love for both friends and enemies—and not the way of the sword, which is the Cross turned upside-down-symbolically and incarnationally!



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## Ethical Requirements for a Culture of Peace

More than talks or a list of proposals, building peace and safety should constitute a mentality that determines the way of thinking and acting of all people: It must be an expression of a culture of peace. This responsibility is put before all people in the campaign for fraternity during this year in Brazil. The following are some of the ethical requirements:

- The project of the kingdom of God is the great foundation that must enlighten any human action to build peace.
- Before any problem concerning public safety, one must take into account the gospel, which reveals the words, the motivations, and the actions of Jesus. It is necessary to overcome the concept of justice, which says that everyone must pay for what they do.
- Mercy, solidarity, and the desire to advance must be the foundation for everyone facing injustice, violence, suffering, conflict, and lack of security.
- No one can pay evil with evil but with good.
- To renounce to all forms of violence.
- It is not justifiable to place in armaments the solution of human conflicts.
- To create new relationships taking into account the principle of fraternity and the necessity of a common social project that will be the cause of good for all people.
- Solidarity for all victims of violence.
- Respect for the dignity of people and engagement in the conflicts so that their dignity may be respected in all conditions of human life.
- Struggle for the personal conversion and the conversion of others.
- The work to evangelize as the best way to establish the principles that make possible a just and fraternal society that ensures peace and security.